

# SUPERMODERNITY, DISTRACTION, SCHIZOPHRENIA: WALKING IN TOKYO & HONG KONG

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*Abstract:* The architecture in a supermodern city has no sense of the place where it is located. This paper discusses how schizophrenia and distraction, through walking, respond to supermodernity by referring to how three dislocated subjects, Fumiya Takemura, Aiichiro Fukuhara and Fai in Tokyo and Hong Kong, are respectively depicted in the novel, *Adrift in Tokyo* written by Fujita Yoshinaga in 1999, with a film adaptation by Satoshi Miki (2007), and the film *To Live and Die in Mongkok* directed by Wong Jing in 2009. It suggests that Hong Kong is more supermodern than Tokyo. After his release from prison, Fai in *To Live and Die in Mongkok* finds that Mongkok is a completely different place from the one in which he used to live. The living conditions are no better than those in the prison. He hallucinates about the past. *Adrift in Tokyo* can be read as a story about walking. Fukuhara, a debt collector, killed his wife; before surrendering to the police, he orders his debtor, Takemura, to walk with him in Tokyo in order to re-experience the walks he enjoyed with his wife. If Takemura agrees, the debt can be paid off. This paper discusses how the repressed heterogeneous time and place can be approached by walking in a way that the rhythm of life can be (re-)experienced; in other words, when the body moves forward physically, the past appears as specter haunting the walker. This paper discusses how *Adrift in Tokyo* and *To Live and Die in Mongkok* read cities in distractive and schizophrenic ways. In the film version of *Adrift in Tokyo*, Takemura's failed relationship with his father may unconsciously drive him to walk with Fukuhara. The novel may imply that the lost relationship with his mother drives him to walk. The film and the novel both address a kind of locality which should be inseparable from the birth parents. *To Live and Die in Mongkok* suggests that supermodernity kills mother and father. The Father-son relationship disappears at the very beginning of the film; the mother-son relationship has been segregated by prison (Fai's mother, who has been "imprisoned" in Mongkok, a supermodern "prison", is disconnected from her son who is imprisoned in Stanley, a real prison) and, in the end, by life and death. To Fai, walking is not possible, and, hence, a father-son relationship cannot be "cosplayed", as Takemura and Fukuhara do. They can "play" as father and son in the ordinary Tokyo. A supermodern Mongkok suggests that an unwalkable city is a prison, a brothel and a madhouse; *Adrift in Tokyo* suggests that a walkable city is a cosplay arena for wandering, for approaching a lost relationship nurtured in locality since birth.

*Keywords:* anthropological place, allegory, spectacle, non-place, prostitution.

A living place should be a place with locality; however, it is devastated by supermodernity. It is a term coined by Marc Augé. To him, supermodernity debases an "anthropological place" to a "non-place". A place with locality, to me, is Augé's sense of an "anthropological place" which can be defined as "relational, historical and concerned with identity" (Augé

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1995: 53). It is “formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how” (101). This is “a principle of meaning for the people who live in it, and also a principle of intelligibility for the person who observes it” (52). It is a place heightened by a sense of trust which

is formed over time from many, many little public sidewalk contacts. It grows out of people stopping by at the bar for a beer, getting advice from the grocer and giving advice to the newsstand man, comparing opinions with other customers at the bakery and nodding hello to the two boys drinking pop on the stoop (...). Most of it is ostensibly utterly trivial but the sum is not trivial at all. The sum of such casual, public contact at a local level – most of it fortuitous, most of it associated with errands, all of it metered by the person concerned and not thrust upon him by anyone – is a feeling for the public identity of people, a web of public respect and trust, and a resource in time of personal or neighborhood need. The absence of this trust is a disaster to a city street. Its cultivation cannot be institutionalized. And above all, *it implies no private commitments* (Jacobs 1992: 56).

There are inhabitants, not users<sup>1</sup>, who “live in it, cultivate it, defend it, mark its strong points and keep its frontiers under surveillance” (Augé 1995: 42) in an anthropological place. A space which cannot be defined as “relational, or historical, or concerned with identity” will be a “non-place” (Augé 1995: 53). A “supermodern condition” is characterized with “an abundance of [such] space, “an abundance of signs” and “an abundance of individuation”<sup>2</sup>. Such non-places

have the peculiarity that they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their “instructions for use”, which may be prescriptive (“Take right-hand lane”), prohibitive (“No smoking”) or informative (“You are now entering the Beaujolais region”). (...) This establishes the traffic conditions of spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals but ‘moral entities’ or institutions (Augé 1995: 96).

A non-place functions like a supermarket chain, instead of local stores:

The customer wanders round in silence, reads labels, weighs fruit and vegetables on a machine that gives the price along with the weight; then hands his credit card to a young woman as silent as himself (...). There is a more direct but even more silent dialogue between the cardholder and the cash dispenser: he inserts the card,

then reads the instructions on its screen, generally encouraging in tone but sometimes including phrases (“Card faulty”, “Please withdraw your card”, etc.) that call him rather sternly to order. All the remarks that emanate from our roads and commercial centers, from the street-corner sites of the vanguard of the banking system (...) are addressed simultaneously and indiscriminately to each and any of us: they fabricate the “average man”, defined as the user of the road, retail or banking system (Augé 1995: 99-100).

Trust is replaced by contractual liability in a supermodern space. Augé puts it: “As anthropological places create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality” (94).

Hans Ibelings’ discussion of global architecture with reference to Augé’s conception of supermodernity in his book, *Supermodernism: Architecture in the Age of Globalization*, shows that contemporary architecture is predominantly supermodern in nature. Supermodern architecture does not belong to any particular place. It can exist anywhere, and gives no sense of locality. When a city is occupied by it, it becomes, in Rem Koolhaas’s term, a generic city, to borrow from Augé, a “non-place” or a “supermodern” city. I do not read supermodernity as a distinct concept from modernity; it exists, to me, as a pathological form of modernity, which will result in dislocation and schizophrenia in a maximal degree. Schizophrenia and distraction in Freud’s and Benjamin’s sense respectively, through walking, act as responses to supermodernity. The impact of supermodernity is discussed with reference to three dislocated subjects, Fumiya Takemura, Aiichiro Fukuhara and Fai in Tokyo and Hong Kong, respectively depicted in the novel, *Adrift in Tokyo* written by Fujita Yoshinaga in 1999, its adapted film with the same title directed by Satoshi Miki in 2007, and the film *To Live and Die in Mongkok* directed by Wong Jing in 2009. In *Adrift in Tokyo*, Sakiko, Takahara’s acquaintance, says, “The brains of our generation do not quite work. They can only follow commands, and cannot act according to circumstances”. Takemura nods and says, “We are prohibited from doing anything else except targeting at one single goal ahead. As a result, we are at a complete loss when we need to cope with unexpected conditions” (Fujita 1995: 162<sup>3</sup>). It seems to me that both admit that the development of a city at a supermodern speed limits the possibility of living otherwise. In my view, walking invites “the configuration of a relationship to a past in such a way as to reveal the possibility of another kind of narrative based on the ‘exceptional’ structured from the present’s desire” (Harootunian

2000: 18); in the other words, “*other* conditions of experience” can be revealed during walking<sup>4</sup>. It helps to approach temporal and spatial heterogeneities repressed by (super)modernity. These are what a homogeneous and rational subject may not consciously experience. *Adrift in Tokyo* proposes a distractive way to read a city; *To Live and Die in Mongkok* a schizophrenic one. In both ways, the past is conjured up in an uncanny way. When Takemura recollects his suicidal friend, Takahashi, he says, “Perhaps, he knows very well, but does not want to acknowledge it. Pressure accumulates over a long period of time, and finally results in such a violent behavior” (61). Would the ending have been different if he had walked? This paper suggests that a supermodern city is not a walkable city since the latter should be an anthropological place.

#### IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN (SUPER)MODERNITY

*Adrift in Tokyo* can be read as a story about walking. Before the story begins, Fukuhara, a debt collector, killed his wife. Before surrendering to the police in Sakuradamon, he orders his debtor, Takemura, to walk with him in Tokyo to retrace the steps he took with his wife. If Takemura agrees, the debt can be paid off. Takemura asks him why he doesn’t surrender to the nearest police station or take a tram or a taxi. (Fujita 2009: 50-51) He should read the implications of what Marc Augé writes: “bypasses, motorways, high-speed trains and one-way systems have made it unnecessary for us to linger in them” (73). He is unable to appreciate the importance of Fukuhara’s sense of walking. What counts most, to Takemura, is efficiency and effectiveness. What he says reflects the fact that a modern subject is “compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with this kind” (Marx and Engels 1986: 83). Looking at the mutual reflection of a black stony lantern in a temple and the light in a far-away high building, even though he can appreciate this beauty to a limited degree, he who hurries on his way will not linger there and appreciate this scene in a patient way (247). To him, Tokyo serves only as a cheap hotel merely for use; and he only treats himself as a sojourner.

Takemura is a rootless person: before the story begins, his birth mother abandoned him and his father; after giving him to the other as an adopted son, his father disappeared. His

first adopted mother was stung on the throat by a wasp and died; his adopted father was arrested for car stealing. Her second adopted mother is still in escape. He met his beloved woman in a strip club; because of her, he has run into a debt; then, she disappeared too. He never thinks of the future. He majors in English because he could not get admitted to other disciplines (48). He ostensibly does not have any past burden, and knows nothing about the future; nothing in his present life seems to be worthwhile. He has just been evicted from his rented apartment. In order to pay off the debt, he simply agrees to walk with Fukuhara to the police station in Sakuradamon. His experiences are “rooted in the present” (Harootunian 2000: 2). They echo what Pessoa/Soares writes: “I live in the present. I know nothing of the future and no longer have a past” (Pessoa 1991: 60-61<sup>5</sup>). Perhaps, his modern experience is “understood not merely as a break with the past but as an inability to understand the past” (Bersani 1990: 48). All the abrupt and unprepared changes encountered in the past results in “the lost capacity of consciousness to place itself in relation to history” (Bersani 1990: 48). He is like the motorcyclist, as described by Milan Kundera, “caught in a fragment of time cut off from both the past and the future; he is wrenched from the continuity of time” (Kundera 1997: 1-2). Not only is he unable to get hold of the past, but also the present disappears as well. What can be just observed has been disappearing or even disappeared in modern speed<sup>6</sup>. Takemura represents a modern subject, which cannot experience “the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]” (Benjamin 1992: 252-253). As Pessoa/Soares writes, “even feeling is impossible if one feels today what one felt yesterday, for that is not to feel, it is only to remember today what one felt yesterday, to be the living corpse of yesterday’s lost life” (48). He is in a state of displacement. He in *Adrift in Tokyo* (the novel) is the narrator; the novel can be read as how he reads himself. His position echoes what Pessoa/Soares writes, “To live is to be other” (48). He can be compared with a fly<sup>7</sup>. This fly can be compared with the angel in Paul Klee’s “Angelus Novus”, as Benjamin discussed. What can be seen by the angel, or probably the fly, is not “a chain of events”, but “one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet” (Benjamin 1992: 249<sup>8</sup>). Time is spatially depicted in Fukuhara’s comment on Tokyo: when Takemura and Fukuhara come to a lane between a primary school and a kindergarten, Takemura says: “It is swept away as expected”. His

old home has now become a car park. On this, Fukuhara says, “The benefits brought from the bubble economy are increasing number of car parks in Tokyo” (68). To Harootunian, “our present – indeed, any present – can be nothing more than a minimal unity that I call the *everyday* that has organized the experience of modernity” (Harootunian 2000: 18). Every present should not be “homogeneous, empty time”, but “the presence of the now”<sup>9</sup>. However, if modernity brings all events into catastrophes, constantly destroying the new landscape, it will not be time that successively carries away each now, each present; rather, each present is empty, vacated of meaning at the moment it arrives (Harootunian 2000: 18). As a result, a modern subject is socially and culturally empty despite the economic and technological advancements. Such emptiness occasionally saddens Takemura: walking with Fukuhara in Tokyo, looking at people heading towards a train station, he feels bitter because he is homeless (40).

Fukuhara is like a *flâneur*. He does not have a preconceived schedule to reach his destination. He says: “If a goal is set at a distant place at the very beginning, walking in Tokyo will not be interesting” (66). Although he has to surrender himself at the police station, it should not be his goal. Idle walking in Tokyo, in fact, is his aim. Everything and everyone he encounters during his strolls conjure up the lost times he spent with his wife in Tokyo. This is anti-modern. This helps him to approach the heterogeneous time repressed by (super)modernity (to be further discussed). At this point, we can see that only a place which can attach to time is worth living: “[f]or all relations that are inscribed in space are also inscribed in time, and the simple spatial forms we have mentioned are concretized only in and through time” (Augé 1995: 58).

To Takemura, Tokyo functions as a “non-place”. Fai in *To Live and Die in Mongkok* is horrified by Mongkok being degraded as a non-living space. To Fukuhara, Tokyo is “a real living place” instead. He says, “I was born in Tokyo. I have moved from place to place since childhood. I love Tokyo more than anyone else” (51). He describes the area around Ikebukuro in the following way:

government body, business sector and hybrid area are mixed together. I like such hybridity. Opposite to the railway line is a long-established university; this is a place with traditional *shitamachi* culture. And the modernized skyscrapers are built around it. This ambience makes me feel that this area is a real living place. It will be great if a slum were added here. Other areas gradually become a

hospital-like boring place. Primitive charm still remains in this area. It's good (251-252).

Fukuhara's Tokyo (especially the area around Ikebukuro) is modern, yet embraced with "primitive charm". It is a modern and anthropological place at the same time. Hence Tokyo, as commented by Fukuhara, "stimulates passion" and, at the same time, "is endowed with pleasant serenity". Because of these two hybrid characters, Tokyo is an exciting place to him (246). Surprise is always encountered by Fukuhara when walking in the street. This walking experience can be loosely seen as Debord's sense of *dérive* (literally: "drifting"): he drops his work and suspends all of his usual activities, letting himself be drawn instead by the attractions of the terrain and the diversions he finds there (Debord 1956). The area around Ikebukuro, then, has "psychogeographical contours"<sup>10</sup>, which come to impact upon Fukuhara. The specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on his behavior and emotions can be read as the result of his engagement with his five senses when walking; for instance, through touching, traces are left on the contacted surface like "the handprints of the potter cling[ing] to the clay vessel" (Benjamin 1992: 91). The traces left are those of the past; they constitute memory, and add anthropological weight to his walking journey through the city. He constructs his own personal map as he walks through Tokyo (a touching/moving experience in both a physical and psychological sense). An awareness of the five senses enables the walker to have a unique attachment to the space in which they move (Fong 2012: 234-236; Fong 2014). The area around Ikebukuro is never a "hospital-like boring place". Although most of us were delivered in hospital, we can hardly have a sense of responsibility in material, social and cultural senses. Hospital is rather a "non-place". It serves "less as social space than as an area that everybody uses individually"<sup>11</sup>. This is a place swamped with regulating symbols. It does not facilitate drifting.

In *To Live and Die in Mongkok*, Fai's memory of the past Mongkok cannot relate to the contemporary one; to him, the latter is a space, not a place. What constituted his past life disappeared under the supermodern speed of city changes. He sees it as a meaningless spectacle, but not with Fukuhara's sense of surprise. He is physically located in the present Mongkok; however, his mind is focused on the past. The present Mongkok, to him, cannot be defined as relational, histori-

cal, or concerned with identity. Detached from his past, he is imprisoned in the present. City changes revolve around him. Supermodern speed paralyzes him. In the film, he always has an expressionless face. He was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder he committed for his triad society. When his parole is granted, it only dislocates him to a larger prison in Mongkok. Mongkok, in Fukuhara's words, is merely a boring hospital to Fai. The joke is that it is not a hospital, which can cure his schizophrenia, but produces it. He is like Mrs. Dalloway, another schizophrenic subject, feeling "the leaden circles dissolved in the air" when Big Ben strikes (Woolf 2000: 4). Mongkok is also no different from a supermodern prison.

Going back to Takemura, he is a rootless person; Tokyo is a brothel for him to "prostitute" himself for mere survival. He does not want to be a person with memory. His first kiss happened in a KTV room (64), a supermodern space without uniqueness, without "primitive charm". It is simply a place for entertainment. Even if Fukuhara re-visits this room, it can hardly stimulate his passion and conjure up any memory, even if he can still remember the room number. Using KTV rooms as an analogy to read (super)modern temporal experience: each KTV room is a homogeneous and empty presence, lacking "the presence of the now". He has not cried for seven or eight years. There is nothing in Tokyo that can stir his emotions. However, Hachiman-gū is a place in which Fukuhara and his wife had their first kiss. Walking with Takemura is the last chance for him to re-visit this anthropological place, a place with pleasant serenity and a place, which can stimulate his passion. In the film, Fukuhara tells Takemura that the love between him and his wife has cooled. They liked taking the last bus at the end of a day in order to feel loneliness. This loneliness allows them to stay in husband-and-wife relationship. During his walk with Takemura, he realizes that Tokyo little by little has become a ruin with one car park after another. After killing his wife, Fukuhara is determined to walk to the police station in Sakuradamon to surrender. Does it mean to say that he prefers prison to the contemporary Tokyo in which he begins to feel the increasingly heavy impact of supermodernity?



## SUPERMODERNITY, OR, THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF LATE CAPITALISM

The prison regime turns Fai into a docile inmate. His good behavior enables him to apply for parole with the help of a district councilor. However, Freud writes, “It is clearly not easy for men to give up the satisfaction of this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it”. (Freud 1991a: 304-305) Freud might suggest that Fai’s aggressive instincts do not die out, but are repressed in prison instead. The relationship between repression and schizophrenia can be seen in Fai’s case: the birth of his imaginary self, Little Fai. To quote from Freud,

in the case of schizophrenia, (...) we have been driven to the assumption that after the process of repression the libido that has been withdrawn does not seek a new object, but retreats into the ego; that is to say, that here the object-cathexes are given up and a primitive objectless condition of narcissism is re-established (Freud 1991b, 202).

The “new object retreated” is Little Fai, Fai’s imaginary and aggressive self. He is young, narcissistic and beyond the control of civilization. Fai says, “Little Fai only appears when he is bullied”. Confrontation with others offers an opportunity to release the aggressive instincts embodied in Little Fai. He says to Pamela, his beloved,

Release from prison only means moving from one cell to another. Mongkok is another cell for life imprisonment after the imprisonment in Stanley [a real prison]. This warden does not allow us to leave!

Freud again can help us to understand what he says a schizophrenic way, he “devotes peculiar care to his way of expressing himself, which becomes ‘stilted’ and ‘precious’. The construction of his sentences undergoes a peculiar disorganization, making them so incomprehensible to us that his remarks seem nonsensical” (Freud 1991b: 203). His utterance, in Freud’s words, “exhibits a hypochondriac trait” (Freud 1991b: 203). Fai’s case can be connected to the case of Tausk, as discussed by Freud. In this case, a female patient

complained that *her eyes were not right, they are twisted*. This she herself explained by bringing forward a series of reproaches

against her lover in coherent language. “She could not understand him at all, he looked different every time; he was a hypocrite, an eye-twister [the German ‘*Augenverdreher*’ has the figurative meaning of ‘deceiver’], he had twisted her eyes; now she had twisted eyes; they were not her eyes any more; now she saw the world with different eyes” (Freud 1991b, 203<sup>12</sup>; emphasis original).

Supermodernity can be seen as a deceiver who “twists” the eye of a supermodern subject, like Takemura. A supermodern city seems to provide freedom to individuals; in fact, it is a prison at least in Fai’s eye. City creates madness; or, at the same time, only madness can see the deceit of the city. Fai may suggest to us that reading such deceit requires a schizophrenic mind so that the city can be read in another way; or, in the Benjaminian sense, only a distracted mind can read such deceit in the case of *Adrift in Tokyo*.

Fai’s imprisonment is the result of his commitment to his triad society and his brothers. He cannot tolerate the disappearance of loyalty and brotherhood in it; what is left is only the pursuits of personal gain in the name of the triad society. Contemporary triad society works under the logic of late capitalism. Everything is possible if money can be earned. The only relation between things and people is seen in monetary terms. No stable identity is needed to maintain unless it earns. The “I” can be anybody. Identity can be schizophrenically performed. In this sense, is there any difference between a supermodern subject and Fai? Schizophrenia can be seen as the cultural logic of late capitalism, or the means of survival in late capitalism. Such schizophrenic experience can be summarized by Jameson:

an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the “I” and the “me” over time (Jameson 1985: 119).

Identity becomes only an image/spectacle for making money. Hence, image building becomes a profitable business<sup>13</sup>. As a result, “a signifier that has lost its signified has thereby been transformed into an image” (Jameson 1985, 120). Mongkok, to Fai, then exists as an image.

To further understand how monetary relationship constitutes schizophrenia, and subsequently dematerialization, we can first discuss Marx’s commodity fetishism: “the commodi-

ty-form, and the value-relation of the products of labor within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [*dinglich*] relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things” (Marx 1990: 165). The fantastic, or phantasmagoric, relationship constitutes the enigmatic character of commodity. Derrida reads such an enigma by treating commodity as phantom: “when the curtain goes up on the market and the table plays actor and character at the same time, when the commodity-table, says Marx, comes on stage (*auftritt*), begins to walk around and to put itself forward as a market value” (Derrida 2006: 188). To Derrida, commodity market functions like a spiritualist séance (Derrida 2006: 189). Commodity haunts a thing (Derrida 2006: 189), and steals its life. When the exchange value of commodity, to Marx, is enigmatic, it is, to Derrida, spectral.

Society of the spectacle is further dematerialized and phantomized. In the contemporary Mongkok, to Fai, in Guy Debord’s words, “where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation” (Debord 2005, Section 1). What is accumulated is spectacle, not capital. There is a difference between the capitalist society in our time and the one in Marx’s time. Debord reads such difference in the following:

the first phase of the domination of the economy over social life brought into the definition of all human realization the obvious degradation of being into having. The present phase of total occupation of social life by the accumulated results of the economy leads to a generalized sliding of having into appearing, from which all actual ‘having’ must draw its immediate prestige and its ultimate function. At the same time all individual reality has become social reality directly dependent on social power and shaped by it. It is allowed to appear only to the extent that it is not (Debord 2005, Section 17).

Commodity market is a spectral-like market. In society of the spectacle, phantomatic commodity appears as spectacle haunting Fai. The effect brought by this specter/spectacle is worse to Fai because compared with commodity market in Marx’s time, society of the spectacle is further away from Fai’s Mongkok. The home in which he has grown up since birth is near the Royal Theatre. To him, Mongkok without the Royal Theatre is no longer Mongkok; and his home, then, does not exist anymore. Locality should be materially produced in Ap-

padurai's sense. Materiality related to the Royal Theatre and its neighborhood nurtures the non-alienated relationship between him and Mongkok. With the absence of the Royal Theatre, Mongkok becomes a dematerialized space. His Mongkok only appears in his memory. He wants to see a film in the first evening in Mongkok after release from prison; or the only means to get access to his past is only filmic when the city becomes "cinematic" (Clarke 1997). What is left is only the imaginary images projected out from his memory. The present Mongkok only appears to him as a series of phantasmagoric spectacles revolving around him. Everything can relate to everything, just in terms of money; and everything can have no relationship to everything if it cannot earn. This Mongkok disappropriate/alienates his living and his past. He is more miserable than Pessoa's fly. What he can see is not reality, but residual spectacle (Harootunian 2000: 2). Spectacle is spectral to him. In this sense, he is haunted by the past specter (his memory) and the present one. Both are invisible. This is a place for consumption, for "prostitution". The irony is that Fai's Mongkok, a red-light district belonging to triad society, is more anthropological and loyal, and that his girlfriend who is loyal to him and his family is a prostitute.

Jameson's discussion of the logic of late capitalism and Debord's society of the spectacle help to read Augé's sense of supermodernity, which applies to Fai's existing Mongkok. When supermodernism becomes the predominant form of architecture, it desecrates the traditional monuments<sup>14</sup> by erecting its postmodern ones. The latter is economically functional, but is socially, culturally and anthropologically empty. Langham Place, a generic office-shopping complex erected in Mongkok for commodity fetishism, can be read as such a "monument". It can exist anywhere. Where it is situated gives no sense of locality. It is in Mongkok and is at the same time not in Mongkok. It turns out to be a schizophrenic place. There is a tendency for society of the spectacle to be occupied by supermodern architecture. There Fai should not be the only schizophrenic person who finds no escape.

Judged by his clothing and his traditional mentality in triad society, Fai is not a modern subject. When Hong Kong changes from a colonial city to a global city in Anthony King's sense (1990), Mongkok "twists" Fai and forces him to skip modernity to become a postmodern subject. To rephrase Lyotard's understanding of postmodernism<sup>15</sup>, he, as a supermodern subject, is first a postmodern (or schizophrenic) being be-

fore being supermodern. The present Mongkok is a trauma to him. His Mongkok disappears without his witness; and he cannot explain the present situation. He is not allowed to get access to his past Mongkok. Worse still, the traces of his past Mongkok are wiped away. Little Fai is “imprisoned” in Fai’s docile body; the latter is “imprisoned” in perpetual present. Fai’s imaginary warden who “imprisons” him can be regarded as the custodian of the supermodern Mongkok. He is forced to behave schizophrenically in this postmodern “prison”. Fai cannot tolerate such dislocation in space and time, and the loss of “rhythm of life”<sup>16</sup>. At this point, I would like to read Fai in parallel with Jameson’s reading of Lacan’s understanding of language. (Then, my reading of Lacan is postmodern too.) According to Jameson, Lacan sees language as a structural one, which contains two (or perhaps three) components: a signifier, a signified and a referent. Jameson says: “(...) for structuralism in general there has been a tendency to feel that reference is a kind of myth, that one can no longer talk about the ‘real’ in that external or objective way. So we are left with the sign itself and its two components” (Jameson 1985: 119). In that sense, things exist in simulacrum. Furthermore, to Lacan, differences between signifiers are not constituted by the respective signifieds they carry. Language is seen as a system of differences without positive terms. We understand things through differences in the system. What the signifier is inferred by what it is not. The language system becomes meaningful under the name of the father (*nom/non du père*). When such anchorage is broken down, anything can mean anything, and, at the same time, becomes meaningless. As a result, the fatherly figure is like a taboo in which the whole community can rest upon. (Freud 1990, 43-224) Such analysis helps Lacan to explain the reason for the importance of the Oedipus complex in psychoanalysis. To Lacan: “(...) because the notion of father, closely related to that of the fear of God, gives him the most palpable element in experience of what I’ve called the quilting point between the signifier and the signified” (Lacan 1997: 268); “In psychotic experience, that the signifier and the signified present themselves in a completely divided form” (Lacan 1997: 268); “In a psychosis everything is there in the signifier” (Lacan 1997: 268). To Fai, as discussed in the above, Mongkok is degraded as the society of the spectacle. Without the Royal Theatre, he cannot figure out the difference between here and there. Fai needs a “quilting point”. Little Fai, who alludes to the past patriarchal structure, is set up in his imagi-

nation so that he can be given an anchorage. Therefore, Fai, a schizophrenic, is, at the same time, paranoid; he is in constant fear of any disturbance to his imaginary paternal order, and hence creates a “speculative system” (Freud 1991c: 91) to protect himself from an imaginary enemy; or he is in need of enemy to justify the existence of quilting point. This quilting point, in Žižek’s sense, is the need of the “big other”, “the symbolic substance of our lives”. It is “a set of unwritten rules that effectively regulate our speech and acts, the ultimate guarantee of Truth to which we have to refer even when lying or trying to deceive our partners in communication, precisely in order to be successful in our deceit” (Žižek 2005: 330). When Mongkok deceives Fai, he finds his way to deceive himself in order to survive in Mongkok. Fai’s father has been killed in a fight, as seen at the beginning of the film. Triad society which is paternal in nature becomes the only place which gives him a sense of security; it tied him to the quilting point. When the structure of the traditional triad society is gone, he imagines a Little Fai alluding to it. The “real” Mongkok is insignificant to him; he is living in his imaginary one. In a Lacanian sense, he privileges the Oedipus complex (Lacan 1997: 268). The Oedipus complex is the quilting point at which meaning can be generated. Without the complex, anything can mean anything. It is horrible to Fai not to be placed in the symbolic order. Schizophrenia is the only means for him to escape from the present Mongkok and to get tied to the vanishing quilting point. This schizophrenia gives him a fetishistic protection, helping him to escape from such castrated space (non-place). This analysis shows the wisdom of Fai’s mother: “If he had been mad earlier, he would not have been imprisoned so long”. Like Fai, his mother is schizophrenic as well. She could not admit the fact that Fai was imprisoned. As a result, she has been deceiving herself by believing that Fai has gone to Holland. She continues to deceive herself even after Fai’s release. She gets back her sanity and recognizes Fai as her son immediately before her death. Perhaps, it is better to die than returning to sanity and being forced to face the present Mongkok. Is her death her wisdom? Both Fai and his mother die; only the prostitutes, like Fai’s girlfriend, can survive in the film, and perhaps, in the supermodern Mongkok.

Leaving Mongkok, to Fai, is more horrible than staying there. Leaving Mongkok will destroy his only fetish and exposes him to a castrated supermodernity. To die a proper death is his only way to respond to supermodernity/Mongkok

“prison”. It is the only way which Fai can find meaning to his life, if not prostituting himself in order to survive. At the end of the film, he dies at the border of Mongkok; kneeling down is his death pose. He does not want to leave his Mongkok; and he is not allowed to leave the supermodern Mongkok. The death of his mother signifies his perpetual separation from his Mongkok (his birthplace). Fai’s death leads us to the English title of the film, *To Live and Die in Mongkok*, which refers to Jane Jacobs’s *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. “Trust of a city street”, and “casual, public contact”, as argued by Jacobs, to Fai, have been lost in Mongkok. The consequences will be what Herman Hertzberger writes: “alienation from [one’s] environment’ which leads to ‘alienation from [one’s] fellow residents” (Hertzberger 2000: 253). As a result, inhabitants are degraded as users. Fai’s case is the worst. Not only does he find no attachment to land, but also he does not find the present Mongkok useful to him. He is neither a user nor an inhabitant. The death or life of the contemporary Mongkok is no longer significant to him. It can merely function as his tomb before and after his death.

#### WALKING IN A SUPERMODERN CITY

Fai’s Mongkok is devoid of the Royal Theatre. Takemura’s old home has been pulled down; his traumatic past drives him to live only in the present and think in a supermodern way. Both Fai and Takemura live under fetishistic protection, though they have different interpretations of past and present. After sorting out his upbringing, Takemura does not feel pity and lonely; instead, he wants to burst into laughter. He says,

If I was only abandoned by my birth mother, my yearning for her may nurture me to be pragmatic and my aspiration to be a family man. Conversely, if I was only abandoned by my biological father, my complaint towards him definitely makes me lose myself and commit crime. In the end, I will turn up walking from a juvenile detention centre to a prison. My present ‘I’, in fact, is unable to live a pragmatic life and does not get on the road of committing crime. My family misfortune follows hard at heel; this has become part of my daily life. My heart is as empty as an vacant house. I am too feeble to curse my fate, unable to work energetically, and hurdle every obstacle independently (90).

In a walk with Fukuhara, Takemura is asked: “This is a place embedded with your memory, don’t you miss this place?”. He replies: “No feeling” (65). His answer is hollow, devoid of power. At the beginning of the journey, Takemura hopes that nothing will happen to disturb his uneventful life. He sets screen against stimuli, insulating him from the past. To survive in Tokyo, he prefers to have an unmemorable life. Benjamin and Leo Bersani’s reading of Benjamin can help us to read his attitude. Benjamin writes:

The greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions, the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less do these impressions enter experience (*Erfahrung*), tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one’s life (*Erlebnis*) (Benjamin 1997: 163).

In his reading of Benjamin, Leo Bersani says: “In the modern city, *Erfahrung* has become nearly impossible, for city dwellers live in a state of shock in which they defensively inhibit impressions from being fully integrated into their history. *Erlebnis* is a ‘passing moment’ isolated from the past” (Bersani 1990: 49-50). Bersani’s reading of *Erlebnis* helps us to understand the impact of the shocking experiences in city. Takemura needs to burst into laughter; otherwise his traumatic past may break into experience (*Erfahrung*) and is integrated into his personal history.

When Fukuhara asks Takemura again of his feelings when walking, the latter replies: “I can only feel cold” (93-94). This reply can be considered as a lie. He, at the same time, thinks in the following way: “Thinking thoroughly, walking here from Kichijōji, there have been a lot of interesting things happening. Very definitely, it will be perfect if Fukuhara didn’t kill his wife and I haven’t had a debt” (94). Fukuhara asks him: “Don’t you really want to see your father?”. “No”, he replies, “I can still remember quite clearly the scene in which he abandoned me” (94). Walking with Fukuhara conjures up his repressed past with his father; however, he refuses to say so; otherwise, he is forced to confront such shocking experience. Feeling cold is to make him detach from Fukuhara, and, at the same time, detach himself from his father (his past). But interestingly, being isolated from the past makes him cold because he has no home to return to. To him, walking with Fukuhara in Tokyo streets, he is saddened by looking at people coming to the stations. He feels that he is the only homeless person



(40). He wants to have memory and, at the same time, does not want to have memory; he is in disavowal. When he looks at the solitary expression occasionally worn deep inside Fukuhara's cruel face, he is touched by a sort of inexpressible intimacy (102). If such unexplainable intimacy is the repressed desire for the father, feeling cold fulfills the two contradictory aims.

After walking with Fukuhara in the Tokyo streets for a short while, Takemura suddenly realizes that he is living in Tokyo. He gradually discovers the importance of walking:

Vehicles pass back and forth along Higashihachi Road", he says, "headlights intertwine; moonlight is shining above my head; this cat is staring at me; some police cars whistle at a distance. Yes, I am living in Tokyo. This taken-for-granted fact comes across my mind. There is a youngster who only eats meals prepared by mother. There is also a paranoid-like old person persistently guarding a refuse dump. And, a greenfield site in which some apartment buildings will be constructed becomes a rubbish dump. This is Tokyo. I still feel good in such horrible places. I look up for the moon in a ruinous construction site. It is miraculously beautiful. (...) Drifting with Fukuhara may be a good relieving experience. Despite some hesitation, I am no longer antagonistic towards this Tokyo walking journey (38).

Walking connects Takemura with the anthropological Tokyo. Its "psychogeographical contours" are having a greater effect on him. He says, "When I am walking with Fukuhara in opposite direction to the station along the northern Ginza main street, the past memory is getting vivid" (68). Walking in opposite direction to the station, his life moves ahead in an anti-modern way. Each time Fukuhara and Takemura drift off, the past is conjured up at once. Walking, then, becomes the activity of unfolding his (perhaps forgotten) biography. (Walking can therefore be read in a broader sense where recollecting is a kind of movement through a space thick with spectral presences; the city becomes a labyrinth of memory<sup>17</sup>). There is a film scene in which Takemura walks backward. On this, he says to Fukuhara, "Walking backward can gradually get back the youth, as told by a comic read before, because walking can turn back the clock". (This makes an old lady whom they come across follow suit). The original Japanese title of the film is *Tenten* (literally: "turn, turn"). The implication of the title is central: time does not move in a linear, but circular, way. (The film can be seen as a turn of the novel [to be discussed in the last section of the paper]). It can also help us to read the significance of Miura Tomokazu's acting as Fukuhara. He has

been a famous icon in Japanese popular culture since the 1970s. He helps both Takemura in the film and his audience outside the film to trace back their forgotten past. Takemura, as a living corpse, has never asked himself if he is living. With Fukuhara's sudden appearance, he begins to understand, through walking, what Fukuhara's saying: "the soaked headlights in a cold rain is also a Tokyo scenic spot" (92).

Looking at what was used to see but was always overlooked, living in Tokyo, this taken-for-granted fact, suddenly appears in his mind; in other words, "the other conditions of existence" suddenly pops up in his conscious mind. Walking enables him to re-read and live in Tokyo otherwise; in other words, to "rethink the relationship to material space – the city – to time" (Harootunian 2000: 21). Living is not for mere survival in the modern pace of relentless progression which results in fragmented life, but is to enjoy "every presence of the now". Such "other conditions of existence are not hidden", but always already appear at the surface. "Horrible places" can be "miraculously beautiful" once the focus shifts. Takemura's reflection helps us to understand Siegfried Kracauer. He puts it:

The surface-level expressions, however, by virtue of their unconscious nature, provide unmediated access to the fundamental substance of the state of things. Conversely, knowledge of this state of things depends on the interpretation of these surface-level expressions. The fundamental substance of an epoch and its unheeded impulses illuminate each other reciprocally (Kracauer 1995: 75).

Walking helps him to read the reciprocal illumination of "the fundamental substance of an epoch [living]" and "its unheeded impulses [Tokyo's ordinary beauty]". To Fukuhara, his focus on "the surface-level expressions", however, by virtue of their unconscious nature, provide unmediated access to "the fundamental substance of the state of things". Fai is impossible to read the "surface-level expressions" because Mongkok is different from Fukuhara's Tokyo: what remains in Mongkok is only spectacle, not allegories<sup>18</sup> whereas in Tokyo, these "surface-level expressions" remain for Fukuhara's interpretations. In this sense, Mongkok is more supermodern than Tokyo; in this sense, Tokyo is more a literary space than Mongkok. Tokyo is a place filled with allegories but not with regulating symbols, as seen in Mongkok. Such literary space helps Fukuhara and Takemura to read Tokyo in an allegorical way. Mongkok does not give Fai an opportunity for walking, and,

hence, literary training. At this point, Harootunian is important for us to read the importance of strolling in city. To him,

the city especially offered the occasion for contemplating and re-counting in its myriad signs “forgotten yet unforgettable meanings”, waiting there like mute allegories to be “reawakened” (Harootunian 2000: 21).

Walking “reawakens” Takemura “forgotten yet unforgettable meanings” which are waiting like mute allegories in Tokyo; in other words, during walking, the past (the specter) is conjured up by retracing the present *traces* (17), those “myriad signs”. This activity, seen as conjuration, trains him to become a participant, instead of a fly, a spectator, of everyday life, to access to the rhythm and the warmth of life, and feel “the presence of the now”. At this point, we can refer to Michel de Certeau’s discussion of the fascination of a haunting place:

there is no place that is not haunted by many different spirits hidden there in silence, spirits one can “invoke” or not. Haunted places are the only ones people can live in – and this inverts the schema of the *Panopticon*. (...) Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. “I feel good here”: the well-being under-expressed in the language it appears in like a fleeting glimmer is a spatial practice (de Certeau 1984: 108).

Tokyo is an exciting place to Fukuhara, as discussed, because there are myriad mute allegories to be read during walking. To accomplish this, walking, in his sense, should be slow (41-2), and above all anti-modern; in this process, he can feel Tokyo in a relaxing manner (41). This kind of walking requires a Benjaminian reception of architecture. It helps to nurture distraction. Benjamin writes:

Buildings are received in twofold manner: by use and by perception. Or, better: tactilely and optically. Such reception cannot be understood in terms of the concentrated attention of a traveler before a famous building. On the tactile side, there is no counterpart to what contemplation is on the optical side. Tactile reception comes about not so much by way of attention as by way of habit (Benjamin 2008: 40).

Tokyo which can be experienced in Kracauer, Harootunian, Benjamin, and de Certeau's manner is a place which Takemura suddenly realizes his other condition of existence; such existence reawakens him that he is living in Tokyo: it is a haunted place full of mute allegories, fleeting glimmers, like "the soaked headlights in a cold rain" (92), offering surface-level expressions waiting to be awakened by a tactile activity, walking, in a distractive manner. Walking makes Tokyo less supermodern to Takemura.

At the beginning of his walk in Tokyo, Takemura only reads it as a means. In the middle of the film, wandering in the street after losing Fukuhara and searching for him in vain, Takemura, in a monologue, says: "I cannot figure out how long I haven't been dedicated to accomplish one task; perhaps, it is the first time after the death of my father when I was in the primary school". In his search, Takemura comes across the Shinjuku Old Lady's street stall. Advertising posters are hanging on the wall behind it: "We offer services including exorcism searches for missing people"; "are you waiting for someone?". Hanging there as "mute allegories", such signs are haunting to him; they reawaken his "forgotten yet unforgettable meanings". They allude to the missing Fukuhara. His disappearance conjures up the shocking experience of being abandoned by his father when he was a child. Such experience is not what Pessoa says: "one feels today what one felt yesterday". The traumatic experience of being abandoned by his father is contemporary (Freud 1991d: 276). It is "not mere memory, the remembrance of the way things were, the detached view promising to show what 'actually happened'", but "a history of the present" (Harootunian 2000: 21-22; quotes Heidegger's program of "historicality"). Supermodernity paralyzes Takemura's sense of everydayness which is "a form of disquiet, a moment suspended" (Harootunian 2000: 21). The signs posted up behind the Shinjuku Old Lady's street stall are "fleeting glimmers" whose allegorical significance is subjectively and ambiguously haunting only to Takemura in a particular moment of time and space<sup>19</sup>. (In the novel, Takemura, as the narrator, writes: "After finishing worshipping in a temple, Fukuhara and I leaves from the main door. Then, we hear car sounds outside the temple. I ask Fukuhara, 'Does Hachiman-gū give you some special memory?' He replies, 'This is the place in which my wife and I have our first kiss'. I, then, burst into laughter" (63). Hachiman-gū is allegorically insignificant to Takemura).

Walking to Nakano, looking for an overhead platform, witnessing the boulevards extending in an unchanging manner, a thought is conjured up: “Fukuhara and I look like father and son with heavily soaked footsteps. Nobody gives us a glance. I deeply feel – this is exactly Tokyo” (101). I tempt to ask if the lost relationship with his father heightens his unconscious desire to walk with Fukuhara. (The memory with his father might be as “moist” as the “heavily soaked footsteps”<sup>20</sup>). However, he realizes that thing will not be perfect because he cannot go on walking with this “father” forever. If he had not had a debt, he wouldn’t have met Fukuhara; if Fukuhara hadn’t killed someone, he wouldn’t have gone for a walk with him; sadly, Fukuhara has to surrender to the police sooner or later. Their walk is destined to lead to an unchanging fate; and he is destined to be abandoned in a Tokyo “boulevard”. Tokyo boulevards extend in an unchanging manner; the generic space in Tokyo exists everywhere. (Super)Modern time progresses like Tokyo boulevards: every succeeding moment of time is “empty, neutral and homogeneous”. Walking through hollow time-space, Takemura reflects on his blank life. This conjures up the repressed time with his father. This makes him realize that Tokyo is the place in which he has been growing up. He might understand what de Certeau writes: “haunted places are the only ones people can live in”.

The Tokyo in which he can walk with Fukuhara, to Takemura, should be the Tokyo in which he and his father lived together; however, Fukuhara has to surrender to the police. Near the end of the film, Takemura miserably says, “Happiness comes secretly; its slowness can hardly be discernible; yet misfortune falls onto us without warning”. His desperate aphorism can be read as his interpretation of Fukuhara’s sense of surprise encountered in street walking (246). Fukuhara’s presence to him is “a decisive blow which is struck left-handed”<sup>21</sup>. If Fukuhara’s appearance and disappearance is not so transient, the repressed memory with his father will not be reawakened. Walking is a form of distracting activity. It makes concentration impossible. Thoughts wander during walking. When Takemura is sitting on a bench in a park waiting for Fukuhara, a man carrying a bass guitar and an amplifier suddenly appears in front of him. Walking aimlessly, he plays rock “n” roll in an improvised way. Takemura is attracted by him, leaves the park and follows him. The guitarist is being looked at in the street. When he is walking near a police station, Takemura hopes that he can continue his music; how-

ever, he does not and walks past almost silently. Takemura is disappointed. His encounter with this guitarist suggests that there is only one way to live on under a society of surveillance; loitering is illegal; yet, concentration cannot help him to look for the lost Fukuhara; and concentration is impossible. When he sees the Shinjuku Old Lady's street stall, something irrelevant and unimportant suddenly catches his attention: the words written on the advertising poster: "Are you waiting for someone?". At this moment, he is tired of rootlessness; he does not want to live in solitude. In the nick of time, Fukuhara appears on the other side of the road. He immediately runs across the road, paying no attention to the busy traffic. In this sense, distraction brought by walking connects him to other conditions of existence.

After that, they begin to share their own stories during the walk. Storytelling, in Benjamin's sense, is "the ability to exchange experiences" (Benjamin 1992: 83). Benjamin says: "In every case the storyteller is a man who has counsel for his readers. (...) Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom" (Benjamin 1992: 86). "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (Benjamin 1992: 87). What Fukuhara and Takemura are telling during walking is not other's stories, but their own respective life experiences. Takemura's stories counsel Fukuhara; they may prompt him to say that if Takemura were Fukuhara's son, his relationship with his wife could improve. Fukuhara's story helps Takemura to have a chance to play roller coaster with him so that he can approach a kind of lost father-son relationship. Walking puts Fukuhara and Takemura in an ambience, which connects to the past memories, and draws them into a father-son-like relationship. When Fukuhara shares with Takemura his walks accompanied by his wife, Fukuhara's memory in fragmented images is projected on the silver screen. Walking, to me, is a distracting activity; stories shared during walking should be fragmented and distractive as well. When walking, their storytelling is not linear, well-connected, preconceived or conscious, but is "a decisive blow which is struck left-handed". In the toilet, Takemura asks Fukuhara about the motive for killing his wife, Fukuhara breathes deeply, and answers: "Should this topic be discussed here?" (54). Fukuhara asked something related to Misuzu, his ex-girlfriend; Takemura replies: "Never talk about her again". Fukuhara responds: "You started this topic first"; "this is un-

intentional” (113). Such unintentionality is never *purely* unintentional, but may be the product of the distractive mind activated by walking. It does not restore Takemura to a unitary self, but connects him to the moments of disquiet in his ordinary life.

Mongkok, to Fai, offers no opportunities for the past to be conjured up because the traces there are wiped off. In his eye, it becomes a generic space. Without the possibility of walking, the case to Fai is the worst. However, even if Mongkok is as walkable as Tokyo, his schizophrenic condition remains because his way of coping with supermodernity is concentration, but not distraction; he lacks the ability of reading otherwise unless he can learn literature and/or Hong Kong becomes more literary. (There is a scene in *Adrift in Tokyo* in which three colleagues of Fukuhara’s wife visit her home. When they are leaving a noodle restaurant, they are shot in the foreground; the background is about a long queue waiting outside the restaurant. The film depicts two scenes simultaneously; and we are required to read both in distraction<sup>22</sup>).

#### ABANDONMENT IN SUPERMODERNITY

The lost relationship with his father may unconsciously drive Takemura to walk with Fukuhara in the film. The novel does not allude much to the father-son relationship. It begins with a new pachinko parlor. This alludes to another parlor in Sugamo in which Takemura met his beloved, Misuzu, who put him in a great debt. He describes their first encounter in this way: “When I first met Misuzu, she wore a red miniskirt. Of course, I did not then *definitely* love her at first sight; however, I am *afraid* that it somehow has an effect to certain extent” (79; my italics). He does not admit that the red miniskirt is the cause of his love. As far as he can remember, when his birth mother abandoned his father and him at the age of three, she wore a red skirt (78-79, 253, 261). It is possible to say that Misuzu in the red miniskirt dovetails into the image of his mother (compared to Fai, the Royal Theatre fulfills his ideal homely image of Mongkok). Misuzu reminds him of his motherly *image*, not his mother (similarly, Fukuhara recalls the *image* of his father, not his father). What can be recalled is the *image* of the past, not the past. He consciously acknowledges the origin of his loss, but is too afraid to admit this fact. Fall-

ing in love with a fetishistic image fulfill his disavowal attitude. On fetishism, Freud writes:

It is not true that, after the child has made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He has retained that belief, but he has also given it up. (...) Yes, in his mind the woman *has* got a penis, in spite of everything; but this penis is no longer the same as it was before. Something else has taken its place, has been appointed its substitute, as it were, and now inherits the interest which was formerly directed to its predecessor (Freud 1991e: 353).

This substitute “signified that women were castrated and they were not castrated” (Freud 1991e: 356). The red mini-skirt serves as a substitute in a similar manner.

The novel may imply that looking for Misuzu unconsciously drives Takemura to walk with Fukuhara. He was tragically abandoned by both his birth mother and Misuzu. In the end, he realizes that the one who helps him to find Misuzu is dramatically his mother. This suggests further that double abandonments unconsciously drives him to walk in order to find these two women. Misuzu chooses to become a nun; in other words, she abandons him again. Being abandoned by Fukuhara and Misuzu, he dares not have any anthropological connection with Tokyo (and probably his mother) in fear of being repeatedly abandoned. When he finally realizes that the woman who helps him to find Misuzu is his birth mother, he chooses to become a Freudian boy playing a “*fort/da* game”:

At the outset he was in a *passive* situation – he was overpowered by the experience [of being detached from his mother]; but, by repeating it, unpleasurable though it was, as a game, he took on an *active* part. (...) Throwing away the object so that it was ‘gone’ might satisfy an impulse of the child’s, which was suppressed in his actual life, to revenge himself on his mother for going away from him. In that case it would have a defiant meaning: ‘All right, then, go away! I don’t need you. I’m sending you away myself’ (Freud 1991f: 285).

After playing his “*fort/da* game”, Takemura says: “I hope I can move on, if possible. I think that I will get disoriented once I stop”. He chooses to be an urban nomad for the sake of mastering the passive situation. He conjectures that he will be abandoned again once his life is stabilized and the relationships between the place and its people are built up. Exile in the city, to him, will be his response to supermodernity.



Takemura's situation is at least better than Fai, Fukuhara's wife, his birth mother and Fai's mother. Adrift in Tokyo is only enjoyed by man<sup>23</sup>. Woman's confinement is articulated in the case of Fukuhara's wife. She was murdered by her husband at home; in other words, she was trapped at home in her life and afterlife. In the novel, she has lost the discourse to represent herself; readers can only approach her mainly through Fukuhara's discourse. He says to Takemura in a cosplay locale:

My wife looked forward to an opportunity of identity change. I was her only boyfriend before marrying me. She did not work after marriage for twenty-two years, and led an ordinary life with me. One day, she suddenly doubted the meaning of existence; hence, similar to those cosplayers, she had a desire to take an escape journey to an imaginary world. (...) She is determined to turn to another self, wandering in nocturnal streets (74-75).

She could not enjoy the moments of disquiet in ordinary life; her other conditions of existence could only exist elsewhere from her everyday life because it was under man's arrangement and did not belong to her. She, unlike Fukuhara and Takemura, could only disguise herself in order to walk, especially in nocturnal streets, if she did not become a prostitute (in Fai's case, he can only take a schizophrenic walk in order not to "prostitute" himself). She was trapped and killed by her husband; Takemura's birth mother is "punished" by Takemura. Near the end of the novel, she explains to Takemura the reason for her leaving:

my living was miserable when you were born, partly because of your father and partly because of my problem. I could not get along with him; hence, I leave with a man. (...) I understood very well that this man could not support our living. I, therefore, did not bring you to go (324).

Takemura does not forgive her and abandons her. He can take a dislocated walk; Fai chooses to live in a schizophrenic way; Fukuhara can be adrift in Tokyo before surrendering. Fukuhara's wife and Takemura's mother are more miserable. Besides, their role in the city is to fulfill man's imagination: Takemura searches for his mother and beloved in his unconscious walk; Fukuhara walks in order to search for the lost time with his wife in Tokyo; Fai, after realizing that Mongkok is unwalkable, treats home as his last resort; being with his

mother at his birth home becomes his final escape; when she dies, he follows suit.

*Adrift in Tokyo*, as a film, deals with a father-son relationship, and, as a novel, a mother-son relationship. Both the film and the novel, to me, address a kind of locality which is inseparable from the birth parents. *To Live and Die in Mongkok* suggests that supermodernity kills the mother and father. The Father-son relationship has gone at the very beginning of the film; the mother-son relationship has been segregated by prison (Fai's mother, who has been kept in Mongkok, a super-modern prison, is disconnected from her son who is imprisoned in Stanley, a real prison) and, in the end, by life and death. To Fai, walking is not possible, and, hence, a father-son relationship cannot be simulated/cosplayed, as Takemura and Fukuhara do. They can play father and son in the ordinary Tokyo; Fukuhara's wife can only turn to another self completely separated from her everyday life in order to survive. She is no different from Fai's mother who lives/is "imprisoned" in her imagination/home/her Mongkok. If Fai's mother is not mad, she might, like Fai's girlfriend, become a prostitute in order to survive in the supermodern Mongkok. (Hence, she treats Fai's girlfriend as her daughter-in-law even at their first encounter.) It is a prison to Fai's mother (whose thinking may be akin to Fai's: prison is everywhere), and a brothel to Fai's girlfriend. Fai rejects prostituting himself and is unwilling to betray his past and his locality; madness and death are the result. A supermodern Mongkok suggests that an unwalkable city is a prison, a brothel and a madhouse. *Adrift in Tokyo* suggests that a walkable city is a cosplay arena for wandering, for approaching a lost relationship nurtured in locality since birth.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Hertzberger writes: "The more responsibility users have for an area – and consequently the more influence they can exert on it – the more care and love they will be prepared to invest in it. And the more suitable the area is for their own specific uses the more they will appropriate it. Thus, *users* become *inhabitants*" (253).

<sup>2</sup> This is Ibelings' reading of Auge's idea of supermodernity (Ibelings 2002: 65).

<sup>3</sup> The translation is mine. The original Japanese version, 転々, is published by Shinchosha in 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Bersani says: "To call the inescapable conditions of our experience our 'modernity' is perhaps to accept the challenge of defining *other* conditions of experience, conditions significantly different from our own and predating the modern" (47).

<sup>5</sup> Pessoa attributed the authorship of the book to Bernardo Soares, an imaginary author (“Translator’s Note”: v). Pessoa/Soares shows the essence of modernity: identity can be performed and changed any times.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Abbas’s idea of “culture of disappearance” (Abbas 1997, Chapter 1).

<sup>7</sup> Harootunian says: “Pessoa/Soares is describing ‘life’ from a perspective that is ‘anonymous,’ ‘watchful,’ the experience of merely a ‘spectator’ who has no role in the making of this world and who compares himself to a ‘fly’” (2).

<sup>8</sup> In his reading of Benjamin, Leo Bersani says: “If [Benjamin] (...) was fascinated by what modernity had brought to Paris, Moscow, and London, he also felt that life in these cities had become a constant reminder of personal and cultural loss” (49).

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to Benjamin’s reading of history: “History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]” (Benjamin 1992: 252-253).

<sup>10</sup> This is a term used by Debord in *Theory of the Dérive*. Psychogeography is “the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment (whether consciously organized or not) on the emotions and behavior of individuals” (Debord 1958).

<sup>11</sup> This is Hans Ibelings’ reading of Augé’s supermodernity (65).

<sup>12</sup> The English editor writes that the German word *Augenverdreher* (an eye-twister) has the figurative meaning of “deceiver”.

<sup>13</sup> Jameson says: “Image society and advertising can no doubt document the gradual transformation of commodities into libidinal images of themselves, that is to say, into well-nigh cultural products” (Jameson 1998: 70).

<sup>14</sup> Augé writes: “The monument, as the Latin etymology of the word indicates, is an attempt at the tangible expression of permanence or, at the very least, duration. Gods need shrines, as sovereigns need thrones and palaces, to place them above temporal contingencies. They thus enable people to think in terms of continuity through the generations. (...) Without the monumental illusion before the eyes of the living, history would be a mere abstraction. The social space bristles with monuments (...) which may not be directly functional but give every individual the justified feeling that, for the most part, they pre-existed him and will survive him” (60).

<sup>15</sup> Jean-François Lyotard puts it: “A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern” (79).

<sup>16</sup> Rhythm of life, to Lefebvre, is constituted by “interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy” (15).

<sup>17</sup> I discuss this also in “Ghost Tour in *Rouge*” (Fong 2014).

<sup>18</sup> On allegory, Benjamin writes: “Any person, any thing, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else” (Benjamin 2008: 175). “Yet ambiguity – polyvalence – is the basic trait of allegory; allegory, and the Baroque, glory in the richness of meanings. Yet this ambiguity is the richness of extravagance (...). Ambiguity thus stands everywhere opposed to purity and coherence of meaning” (177). He quotes from Herman Cohen, *Aesthetic of Pure Feeling*, II, vol. 3, in *System der Philosophie* (Berlin, 1912), p. 305.

<sup>19</sup> Borrowing from de Certeau, “memories tie us to that place (...). It’s personal, not interesting to anyone else” (108).

<sup>20</sup> I am indebted to the beginning of Wong Kar Wai’s film, *2046*: “All memories are moist” (my translation). It is taken from Liu Yi Chang’s novel, *The Alcoholic*. Moisture produces sticky feeling. When something is moist, the more it is wiped, the moister it is. It is difficult to get rid of sticky feeling. Stickiness is attributed to memory by Ouyang Feng (played by Leslie Cheung) in another of Wong Kar Wai’s films, *Asbes of Time*. He says: “The harder you try to forget something, the more it’ll stick in your memory.”

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin puts it: “Strength lies in improvisation. All decisive blows are struck left-handed” (Benjamin 2000: 49).

<sup>22</sup> Benjamin says, “The values of distraction should be defined with regard to film, just as the values of catharsis are defined with regard to tragedy” (Benjamin 2008: 56).

<sup>23</sup> In her critique of Benjamin’s *flâneur*, Janet Wolff says that the modern urban experience is exclusive to men. “In Baudelaire’s essays and poems, women appear very often. Modernity breeds, or makes visible, a number of categories of female city-

dwellers. Among those most prominent in these texts are: the prostitute, the widow, the old lady, the lesbian, the murder victim, and the passing unknown woman” (Wolff 1990: 41).

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